

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2261

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 5131

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, MX

SUBJECT: RABASA'S CONCERN RE PRESS ATTACKS

1. TODAY FOREIGN MINISTER RABASA SENT FOR ME URGENTLY AND IN SOME AGITATION TOLD ME OF HIS CONCERN REGARDING ATTACKS IN THE PRESS THAT HE HAD SOLD OUT ON CHILE AND THAT HE WAS "A CREATURE OF KISSINGER". HE WAS NOW CONCERNED THAT ON FRIDAY, JUNE 21, GASTON GARCIA CANTU (AN ELDERLY LEFT-WING COLUMNIST WHO ALSO WAS VERY CRITICAL OF MY OWN ASSIGNMENT TO MEXICO) WOULD PUBLISH IN EXCELSIOR A COLUMN CRITICAL OF RABASA. THIS COLUMN WOULD PURPORTEDLY CLAIM THAT JUST WHILE RABASA WAS SYCOPHANTICALLY PRAISING KISSINGER'S ROLE ON SALINITY AND OTHER MATTERS, THE U.S. WAS NOT ONLY SUPPORTING THE CONCENTRATION CAMPS IN CHILE BUT IN EFFECT ITSELF MAINTAINS SIMILAR SETUPS IN THE SO-CALLED "DETENTION CAMPS" IN WHICH MEXICAN ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS WERE HELD AND ALLEGEDLY MISTREATED, AND EVEN TORTURED.

2. RABASA SAID THAT HE WISHED TO GIVE ME ADVANCE NOTICE THAT IN ORDER TO COUNTERACT THE CANTU COLUMN HE WAS SENDING ME A NOTE THIS EVENING WHICH WOULD REVIEW THE SALINITY MATTER WITH ALL THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF ITS SOLUTION, AND WOULD LAY OUT ALL OUTSTANDING MATTERS ON THE BRACERO PROBLEM AND WOULD MAKE A PLEA THAT SOME AGREEMENT, PERHAPS SIMILAR TO THAT RECENTLY CONCLUDED WITH CANADA (MEXICO 5076), BE NEGOTIATED BETWEEN OUR TWO

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GOVERNMENTS. SUCH AGREEMENT SHOULD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT

THE FACTORS OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND AS REGARDS MEXICAN LABOR, WHICH WOULD INSURE EQUAL WAGES AND TREATMENT FOR MEXICAN LABORERS, WOULD ASSURE THAT THE SO-CALLED "DETENTION CENTERS" BE CHANGED OR PERHAPS BE ELIMINATED ENTIRELY AND WOULD SPEAK OF IMPROVED CONSULAR ACCESS TO THE DETAINEES, IN ORDER TO INVESTIGATE ALLEGATIONS OF ILL-TREATMENT, ETC. RABASA PROPOSED TO RELEASE THE TEXT OF THE NOTE TO THE PRESS MORE OR LESS SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH ITS DELIVERY TO US IN ORDER THAT IT CAN BE CARRIED IN TOMORROW'S PAPERS, THUS UNDERCUTTING THE CANTU COLUMN WHICH IS SCHEDULED TO APPEAR THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW. IN HIS COMMENTS TO THE PRESS HE WOULD MAKE CLEAR THAT MEXICAN CONSULAR ACCESS TO THE "DETENTION CENTERS" HAD ALREADY IMPROVED AND WOULD GIVE EXAMPLES.

3. IN ANSWER TO MY QUERY, RABASA ASSURED ME THAT THE NOTE WOULD BE COUCHED IN ELEVATED LANGUAGE AND WOULD BE FACTUAL IN APPROACH. IT WOULD CAREFULLY AVOID LENDING CREDENCE TO ALLEGATIONS OF MISTREATMENT AND PARTICULARLY TORTURE AT THE "DETENTION CENTERS". HE ASKED THAT I KEEP SECRET THE FACT THAT HE HAD GIVEN ME ADVANCE WARNING OF THE CONTENT OF THE NOTE AS THIS WOULD UNDERMINE HIS CREDIBILITY WITH THE PRESS, BUT THAT DESPITE THIS HE WISHED "TO PLAY FAIR" WITH US BY TELLING ME OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT HAD LED TO THE NOTE AND THE NATURE OF ITS CONTENTS. HE SUGGESTED THAT WHEN IT WAS PUBLISHED AND I WAS QUERIED BY THE PRESS, I LIMIT MY REPLY TO SAYING THAT I HAD TRANSMITTED FULL TEXT TO THE DEPARTMENT FOR STUDY AND THUS COULD COMMENT ONLY AFTER I HAD RECEIVED INSTRUCTIONS.

4. DESPITE FACT THAT LAST COMMENT SEEMED GRATUITOUS, I THANKED RABASA FOR HIS COURTESY IN GIVING US ADVANCE WARNING AND SAID I WOULD AWAIT RECEIPT OF NOTE THIS EVENING. I TOLD HIM THAT I WISHED HIM TO KNOW THAT WE ALSO HAD PROBLEM REGARDING TREATMENT OF AMERICAN PRISONERS IN MEXICAN JAILS AND THAT I WANTED HIM TO UNDERSTAND THAT THIS ALREADY EXISTED AND WOULD BE THE SUBJECT OF INFORMAL, FRIENDLY CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN US LATER IN ORDER TO OBTAIN ANY SUSPICION THAT WE WERE CONFIDENTIAL

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RAISING THIS MATTER IN "RETALIATION" FOR ALLEGATIONS CONCERNING OUR OWN "DETENTION CENTERS". HE ASSURED ME OUR MOTIVES WOULD BE ABOVE SUSPICION BUT HE PLEADED THAT WE NOT TAKE UP THE AMERICAN PRISONER ISSUE CONCURRENTLY WITH THE "DETENTION CENTERS" IN ORDER TO AVOID ANY SUSPICIONS ON THE PART OF HIS COLLABORATORS OR OTHERS. I TOLD HIM THAT ACTUALLY I HAD REFRAINED FROM SUBMITTING THIS MATTER IN WRITING PRECISELY IN ORDER TO AVOID LEAKS

AND TO GIVE HIM ADEQUATE FOREWARNING, AS SOME OF THE PRISONER'S COMPLAINTS INCLUDED ALLEGATIONS OF MISTREATMENT AND EVEN ELECTRIC SHOCK AND OTHER MEANS OF TORTURE. I HAD FELT THAT THIS WAS MATTER THAT HAD BEST NOT BE PUT IN WRITING AT THIS STAGE AND MOREOVER DISCUSSED AT A LOWER LEVEL PRIOR TO MY RAISING IT WITH HIM OFFICIALLY AT SOME LATER DATE.

JOVA

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